

A CHEERFUL TEMPER.

*A Sermon by the Rev. William Adams, D.D. Delivered Thanksgiving Day,
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He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.—PROV. xv. 15.

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.—PROV. xvii. 22.

AN excellent minister of my acquaintance is in the habit of selecting the texts of his Thanksgiving sermons out of the Book of Lamentations. Appropriateness is the first law in all kinds of discourse. The elegies of the weeping prophet are a part of the Sacred Volume, and frequent enough are the occasions when they may be used with utmost pertinency. But so it happens that this day—the only day in our calendar of the kind—is the one in which dirges are not so appropriate as carols. It has been designated, according to an ancient custom, not for fasting and humiliation, but for the gladness of praise; not to furnish the Pulpit with an opportunity for pelting the civil magistracy, nor for indulging in lugubrious complaints and apprehensions as to the condition and prospects of political affairs; but specifically to rehearse those acts of the Divine goodness which should inspire us with gratitude and incline us to a cheerful expression of thanks. That man who, in the worst state of affairs, can not discover material enough for praise, is already in a morbid and most deplorable condition.

Though this particular day is designated by the civil

authorities, it should be borne in mind that in the one only national organization which had God for its author, several days in the year were set apart by Divine institution for religious festivities. Spring, Summer, and Autumn had each its festal symbolism; the most joyous of which, called the Feast of Tabernacles, was an annual Thanksgiving—not only in memory of ancestral favors, but for the ingathering of the harvests. Nothing can be conceived more beautiful than the manner of its observance. Booths were erected in the open air, out of branches from the palm and willow, within which families were gathered, to eat together before the Lord, so that the occasion was sacred to the reunion of friends, the enjoyment of hospitality, the interchange of kindness, the expression of generous regard for the stranger, the widow, and the fatherless. Nor was it lawful for a Jew so much as to taste of ear or parched corn, or bread of the new harvest, till a nation had borne a sheaf of barley or wheat, and waved it before God, in His temple, in token of their gratitude. Are we charmed by the picture which the imagination paints of that national spectacle, when the glens of the vine and olive gave forth their happy inhabitants, to flow together into the court of the Lord, with chanting of psalms and waving of sheaf and branch? but when did the sun ever look down upon such a scene as is this day spread beneath his eye on this Western Continent, a land unknown and undreamed of when Hebrew feasts were instituted; where so many States of our Confederacy have agreed to devote one and the same day for thanksgiving to our common Father for His abundant goodness? What millions of well-clad, well-fed, well-taught, and, if they would but believe it,

happy people, are to-day to be seen within the temples of religion, and the homes of health, comfort, and plenty. As my mind traverses over the extended scene, it rests, not so much on metropolitan affluence, on gatherings within stately mansions and tapestried walls, where sumptuous fare is of daily occurrence, as on those humbler habitations of rural life, where man is brought by earth, sky, and season into closer communion with God. Toil is at rest, and contented with its rewards. Plow and flail are exchanged for recreation. If nature is more silent than in earlier months, when birds and beasts are full of jocund music and life, it is the silence of peaceful contentment. The rich autumn sunlight bathes the sere and yellow stalks and husks of corn still standing in the field, divested of summer floss, and greenness, reduced to the undress of the year, yet testifying of the golden wealth it has yielded to man; barns bursting with plenty; the cattle chewing the cud with mute thankfulness; families reassembled in the old homestead; mirth in the voices of the young, and placid delight warming the ashy hue of age; what images of serene satisfaction are those which are presented by the employments in which a nation is this day engaged! Consider, withal, the degrees of latitude over which this observance is extended! The magnolia and the rose have not yet ceased to emit their perfume in the States of the South, while along our northernmost frontier winter has already converted the streams into ice. One of the chief advantages, we are told, of the national festivity of the Hebrew, was by friendly intercourse between those of different clans and tribes, to promote a spirit of common patriotism. If this day of thanksgiving would but be observed in

a becoming spirit, how much would it accomplish in the way of purifying and strengthening the sentiment of nationality, which, though it was fostered by ancestral memories, cemented by the blood of our fathers, and wrought into the structure of our continent by the hand of God, in the flow of rivers, the clasp of lakes and ridges, and the embracing arm of an unbroken seaboard, has come—God forgive us that it is so—to be spoken of most slightly, to be struck at most ruthlessly, as if it were a common and an unclean thing.

The occasions for gratitude are as numerous as the favors of Providence. In former discourses we have rehearsed some of the great constellations of Divine goodness, and considered also the common mercies of daily life, forgetting not those benefits which come in the form of tears and mellowing discipline; but to-day I have chosen a theme which transcends them all. The greatest boon of Providence is a *disposition* to enjoy all things. Mr. Addison closes one of his essays in the *Spectator* with these lines, adopted now into our Sabbath hymns, and familiar to all who read the English tongue:

“Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a *cheerful heart*,
That tastes those gifts with joy.”

Not the least! It is the whole. It is the mind itself which colors all outward conditions; and affluence of gifts would leave one in misery if there were no interior disposition to cheerfulness. “He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast.” Some nicety of discrimination is necessary, if we would hit the exact meaning of the expression. Changes have occurred in the significancy of words since our English version was

made, which might mislead the unthinking. Merriment most readily suggests the idea of conviviality and jollity. A "Merry Andrew" excites boisterous laughter. We naturally associate with merriment the absence of the higher qualities, and, except in the case of children, with whom animal spirits are an exuberant fountain of gayety, we more generally connect it with artificial stimulants—the sparkling cup and the shout of high-sounding festivity. Instead of commending hilarity like this as a medicine, we have the impression that the Scriptures compare it to something else, which begins with an M—madness. Collating the several passages in the Old and New Testament, in which the word thus translated merry is used, we find no difficulty in ascertaining the precise intention of the word. "Is any among you merry? let him sing psalms," says the Apostle James. The word here used is the very same which Paul employed when addressing the ship's company in danger of wreck—"Be of good cheer"—circumstances suggesting the pertinency of bravery and hope, but forbidding any approach to hilarity. The Hebrew word in our text is translated in the Septuagint by a synonym which is used elsewhere in the New Testament (1 Thess. iv. 11) to express quiet contentment; the same which Plutarch frequently employs in his essay on *Mental Tranquillity*. So that we are fortified by usage, scriptural and classical, in adopting this as the exact shade of thought in the text—"A cheerful heart doeth good, like a medicine." The etymology of the word *euthumeo*, be of good cheer, conveys a lesson—*well-minded, well-disposed*—for cheerfulness always has in it an element of goodness, while merriment may co-

exist with folly and crime. When Milton describes the fallen angels, after the Stygian Council was dissolved, dispersing in various directions, some indulging in feats of strength and speed, with uproarious mirth; and when Death himself is represented by the same author, as "grinning horribly a ghastly smile," it does not shock the taste; but had he described either as *cheerful*, radiant with smiling tranquillity, we should have felt the incongruity, for he is describing the dark forms of guilt and woe.

While in this part of my subject, let us mention a few more distinctions separating cheerfulness from other things with which it is often confounded. It is not the same as wit; though a cheerful temper may show its play through wit, if this intellectual quality exist. "Foolish jesting" is condemned alike by good manners, taste, and Scripture. The quick associations of wit are of the intellect and not of the heart, and too frequently have they been associated with cruelty of disposition. Endeavoring to be witty is always weak and pitiable. That was sage advice which Dean Swift gave to a young clergyman: "I can not forbear warning you," says he, "in the most earnest manner, against endeavoring at wit in your sermons, because by the strictest computation, it is very near a million to one that you have none, and because too many of your profession have made themselves everlastingly ridiculous by attempting it." To which may be added, if the Pulpit is ever the place for wit, never, never is it the place for levity. Though this intellectual gladiatorship of wit is often employed in the service of cruel satire and stinging sarcasm, yet it may be associated with more genial and kindly

qualities. Should I say that there were a few cases in which the Apostle Paul has used the rapier thrust of wit, I should not be understood by those who do not comprehend through a translation the sharp point of certain Greek words. The principle advocated by Shaftesbury, that "ridicule is a test of truth," can not be conceded; but if ever there was a book mighty in its wit, it is *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress*. The name of the streets in Vanity Fair; of the judges, jury, and counsel in the trial of Faithful, excite a smile at the witty adroitness; but it is a wit like the smooth beauty of the lightning, which demolishes what it hits. So, again, cheerfulness is distinct from the sense of the humorous, however acute it may be. Humor is a sign of sensibility, of pathos, a deep, rich sort of feeling, even though it be sad; for the very word signifies moisture, and, like April weather, smiles and tears are mingled together in its composition. The most grotesque images may be suggested and enjoyed by a sense of the humorous, when bodily and mental disease will not allow cheerfulness, of which Cowper was a remarkable instance. The amusing description of John Gilpin, which the most sedate can not read without laughing, was written, it is said, during one of the longest and gloomiest of those seasons of melancholy to which his sad life was subject—a streak of crimson and gold on the edge of the blackest cloud. Instances are well authenticated, in which actors on the stage, with the keenest perception of the humorous, by which they have convulsed houses with obstreperous mirth, have consulted physicians and clergymen for relief from a settled melancholy which was wasting their life.

With these distinctions and discriminations, we must understand by this time what is intended by true cheerfulness. It is not intellectual ability; it is not mere animal spirit; it is not the excitement of artificial stimulant; very distinct is it from jocular and uproarious laughter. It is the tranquil, hopeful, benign, blessed mood, which is rightly described as well-mindedness. It is not a talent, but a disposition. In the proper place I shall show, making all allowance for diversities of constitution, that it is a temper which is to be carefully and wisely cultivated, by methods to be specified before we close. Now, the things affirmed of this cheerful heart, thus defined, are, that he who has it, has a continual feast, and that it doeth good like a medicine. Many are the scenes of domestic festivity in our land to-day; but he who has a feast only on the last Thursday in November has a sad life. There is a daily festivity, which depends not on the quality of the fare with which the table is spread—whether it be a dinner of herbs or stalled ox—but always on those genial qualities of the heart which incline us, as we say, to look on the bright side, and to make the best of everything. Strange that this disposition is not universal. But we come in contact with a most singular fact, which at first is not so easy of analysis, that people are intent on playing the miserable, as if there were a virtue in it. The real solution is, that it is an exhibition of selfishness; for no one is habitually cheerful who does not think more of others than of himself. Multitudes appear to be studious of something which makes them unhappy; for unhappiness excites attention, and attention is supposed to inspire interest, and interest compassion.

You have seen a person of very robust and corpulent habit, so robust as ought to excite perpetual gratitude for joyous health, sometimes putting on the airs of an invalid, for no reason in the world but to draw out toward him some expression of affectionate concern, and so gratify his self-conceit. That very mood which in children is called naughtiness, in young people is dignified with the name of "low spirits," for which they are to be petted and pitied; while in elderly people it is known as "nervousness," for which it is expected they should be humored to the full tension of mortal patience.

The first place for the festal and medicinal play of cheerfulness is home. The parent who does not practice it, loosens the strongest bond which draws children to virtue. Once make the impression that goodness is austere, and it has lost its charms for those who reach conclusions, not through reasoning, but the feelings. Perhaps you can recall persons with whom you have been thrown into contact when you were young, who, in your present judgment, were good, very good, but in every way repulsive. You never associated them with sunshine. You felt that goodness had a strange tendency to make one unhappy. Some of the best men the world has seen have lived to regret just this thing—the want of habitual cheerfulness in the presence of their children. It may be taken as a postulate of the social system, that home should always be the most cheerful and attractive place on earth; and whatever is expended to make it such, is expended wisely and economically. No man is qualified for the first offices of an educator, at home or elsewhere, who is not habitually cheerful. Reverence is an essential

quality of character, but it is a mistake to exact it by gruff austerity. Nothing can be more grotesque, for example, than the enactments for respect which prevailed at Yale College during the last century, when the wearing of a hat in the college yard by a Freshman was interdicted by statute; and the exact measure in rods was specified at which obeisance was to be made to that specimen of the *multum in parvo*—a college officer. Respect, reverence, are not to be compelled by big wigs and elongated faces and assumed dignities; they must be given to cheerful worth, as flowers open themselves to the sun. If it were proper, we could describe some of the grave mistakes which were made in his home by that great metaphysician—of whom any family or any country might be proud—Jonathan Edwards. His biographer informs us that his children were not expected to keep their seats in his presence; that he ate from a silver bowl, as one set apart for special reverence, and that his features seldom relaxed from the one expression of grave austerity. If that good and great man had been more cheerful at heart, some disastrous results probably never would have occurred. There is one, and, so far as I know, only one, passage in all his voluminous writings in which he dropped into a mirthful vein of argument in refuting an opponent. He is arguing that the doctrine of the Arminians concerning the will is an absurdity, and he writes as follows: “If some learned philosopher who had been abroad, in giving an account of the various observations he had made in his travels, should say he had been in Terra del Fuego, and there had seen an animal which he calls by a certain name, that begat and brought forth itself, and yet had a sire and

a dam distinct from itself; that it had an appetite, and was hungry before it had a being; that his master, who led and governed him at his pleasure, was always governed by him and driven by him where he pleased; that when he moved, he always took a step before the first step; that he went with his head first, and yet always went tail foremost, and this, though he had neither head nor tail, it would be no impudence to tell such a traveler that he himself had no idea of such an animal as he gave an account of, and never had, nor could have." I have often imagined what sort of an expression must have stolen across the thin, pale face of Jonathan Edwards when he wrote that most grotesque paragraph. It must have been somewhat like a sun-gleam in the solemn pine-woods of a New England winter.

If we speak of the mistakes of good and pious men, what shall I say by way of commending that sweet cheerfulness by which a good and sensible woman diffuses the oil of gladness in the proper sphere of home. The best specimens of heroism in the world were never gazetted. They play their *rôle* in common life, and their reward is not in the admiration of spectators, but in the deep joy of their own conscious thoughts. It is easy for a housewife to make arrangements for an occasional feast. But let me tell you what is greater and better. Amid the weariness and cares of life; the troubles, real and imaginary, of a family; the many thoughts and toils which are requisite to make the family the home of thrift, order, and comfort; the varieties of temper and cross-lines of taste and inclination which are to be found in a large household—to maintain a heart full of good-nature, and a face always

bright with cheerfulness, this is a perpetual festivity. I do not mean a mere superficial simper, which has no more character in it than the flow of a brook, but that exhaustless patience, and self-control, and kindness, and tact, which spring from good sense and brave purposes. Neither is it the mere reflection of prosperity—for cheerfulness then is no virtue. Its best exhibition is in the dark background of real adversity. Affairs assume a gloomy aspect—poverty is hovering about the door—sickness has already entered—days of hardship and nights of watching go slowly by, and now you see the triumphs of which I speak. When the strong man has bowed himself, and his brow is knit and creased, you will see how the whole life of a household seems to hang on the frailer form, which, with solitudes of her own, passing, it may be, under the “sacred primal sorrow of her sex,” has an eye and an ear for every one but herself; suggestive of expedients, hopeful in extremities, helpful in kind words and affectionate smiles, morning, noon, and night, the medicine, the light, the heart of a whole household. God bless that bright, sunny face, says many a heart before me, as he recalls that one of mother, wife, sister, daughter, which has been to him all that my words have described. Mr. Dickens, I can not think, has been very fortunate in his portraiture of clergymen. If Mr. Chadband must stand as representative of the profession, we must say that the author has not been very happy in his circle of acquaintances. But as for his portraiture of kind-hearted, cheerful, brave women in humble life, he has certainly done the world a service; for when the more stately forms of Shakespeare’s imagination and the rollicksome or thoughtful

heroines of Walter Scott are forgotten, lowly homes will be cheered with the picture of "Little Dot," diffusing an atmosphere of kindness so long as there is a cricket to sing on the hearth.

The first object of an intelligent physician is to inspire cheerful hope in his patient. This is better than drugs. And so the medicinal effect of cheerfulness is most apparent in times of peril and calamity. There are some who have an eye for nothing but evil, whose office it is to croak and grumble, till at length the mischief apprehended comes to pass. Indifference to danger is no sign of a Christian or a patriot. The very love we bear to the Church and to our country renders us sensitive to anything which threatens their peace and prosperity. But we ought never to despair of the fortunes of either. The best medicine in the worst times is a cheerful heart. No man who loves his country, and watches the signs of the times, can shut his eyes to the great perils which thicken on our own horizon. Authentic records inform us that in the seventeenth century our Puritan fathers enacted a law, requiring that any person who should thereafter be elected to the office of Governor should pay a fine of twenty pounds sterling if he would not serve. What would the modest shades of Winslow and Bradford say at the habits of our times, when men scramble for office with an unconcealed ambition for spoils? Can any one doubt that one of our greatest perils is a greed of personal ambition? And then the fears, the jealousies of sectional interests, and the portentous dangers which can not be concealed in connection with Slavery. Magnify and multiply all these occasions for alarm, much as you will. What then? Shall we give

up the ship? What shall we do? Let everything go by the board, and sit down in blank despair? Let us rather imitate that noble class of men who show the best qualities of our nature, on the deck of the ship, when the storm is at its worst, whose bravery, when driven from one expedient to another, inspires the timid with hope. The idea of abandoning our Government as a failure, our Constitution as a rag of worthless paper, let it not be so much as mentioned! but let us rather cherish more of that cheerfulness of spirit which indicates faith as to the issue. Excitements do not imperil it, provided the temper be right. When the temperature of an individual or a community is raised, everything which belongs thereto comes out with the greater force; and the peril is always and only from that which is evil. Let there be nothing but what is humane and kind and good in our nature, and danger is not to be apprehended, even if we be excited to a white heat. Reformers who have succeeded the best in Church and State were of a most hearty cheerfulness. In Luther it amounted very often to jollity. Old Samuel Adams, of Boston, was renowned as much for his sonorous singing of hymns as for his patriotism. Suppose that affairs should wax worse and worse, never will they be mended by impatience, irritability, and petulance. "Fret not thyself," is an inspired counsel for troublous times. Have a good heart, and do the best you can. Trust in the Lord, and mischief will be averted. Reforms which can not be accomplished by good temper, will not be brought about by objurgations and wrath.

Why should I dwell so long on what a cheerful heart can do—the occasions for its exercise—when the

most important question of all is, How can it be acquired? Is not the world evil, and are not occasions for uneasy fears innumerable? Differences in constitutional temperament are very obvious. Let all allowance be made for them. We speak of what pertains to personal culture, and here we claim that cheerfulness must have a religious basis; and the first thing religion teaches is, the immensity of mercy which has supervened upon demerit. True, sin has stricken the world, and a curse has followed upon sin. But this is not the whole. God has dealt with us incomparably above our deserts. As an old writer has expressed it: "It was a rare mercy that we were allowed to live at all, or that the anger of God did punish us so gently; but when the rack is changed for the axe, and the axe for imprisonment, and the imprisonment changed into an enlargement, and the enlargement into an entertainment, and the entertainment passes into an adoption, these are steps of a mighty favor and perfect redemption from our sin. And thus it was that God punished us. He threatened we should die, and so we do, but *not so as we deserved*; we wait for death, and stand sentenced, and every day is a new reprieve, and brings new favors; and at last, when we must die, by the irreversible decree, that death is changed into a sleep, and that sleep is in the bosom of Christ, and there dwells all peace and security, and this passes into glory and felicity. We looked for a Judge, and behold a Saviour! We feared an accuser, and behold an advocate! We sat down in sorrow, and rise in joy. We leaned upon rhubarb and aloes, and our aprons were made of the sharp leaves of the Indian fig-tree. And so we fed, and so were clothed. But the rhubarb

proved medicinal, and the rough leaf of the tree brought its fruit wrapped up in its foldings, and round about our dwellings was planted a hedge of thorns and bundles of thistles, the nightshade, and the poppy; and at the root of these grew the healing plantain, which, rising up into a tallness by the friendly invitation of heavenly influence, twined about the tree of the cross, and cured the wounds of the thorns, and the curse of the thistles, and the maledictions of man, and the wrath of God. *Si sic irascitur, quo modo convivatur?* "If God be so kind when he is angry, what must he be when he feasts us with caresses of the most tender kindness?" Everything we receive above the line of our deserts should foster a spirit of cheerful gratitude.

Next to this reflection, the specific we would prescribe for a cheerful habit is activity in well-doing. Yes, there is evil enough in the world, and we must strive to make it less. How can we be cheerful in such a suffering world? Strive to make it better. Despair, sulks, and pampered indolence are a prey to *ennui*; but he who works for a good object keeps the enemy at bay, and good works leave no place for moodiness.

Excepting such cases of bodily infirmity as incapacitate for all motion, in which patience and submission may enact their own cheerfulness—for those flowers are sweetest which bloom by night—I can not conceive of one having a cheerful temper who is not accustomed to healthful bodily exercise. If there was oddity in the common prescription of the late Dr. Abernethy, of London, to his rich patients, there was much sound wisdom—"Live on a sixpence a day, and earn it."

Half the megrims which invade the domain of religion have their origin in laziness. Doubts and difficulties in spiritual concerns and despondencies in prayer quite as often arise from the want of bodily exercise as from a discriminating conscience. Never pity the man who strikes the anvil, or holds the plow, or works the ship, or prosecutes a trade. Give your compassion to the poor, shriveled form that has nothing to do. Cheerfulness is the first-born child of daily work.

There is a subject suggested in this connection which deserves an ampler discussion and the best consideration of the best men: the necessity of some kind of recreation, which, being innocent in its nature and incapable of perversion, shall give to body and mind a needed stimulus and refreshment. It is, of course, in city life that the problem is of the most difficult solution. No one who began life in the country can forget its simple recreations, its healthful sports. Who does not feel his spirits rise as he recalls the amusements of a northern winter, when sun and stars look down on the smooth and brilliant ice, tempting the skater to his joyous speed, and turning the horse from the dirt and flint of the road to the crystal path, where, with merry music of bell and laugh, he courses over the surface of water without wetting a hair of his fetlock.

The late Sidney Smith, himself a remarkable instance of the most buoyant cheerfulness, has shown an uncommon amount of sound English sense in this one direction to all who would attain an habitual contentment. "Take short views." His meaning would not be comprehended, if we did not remember how many are prone to distress themselves by the fear of remote

possibilities. "Borrowing trouble" is the common expression which describes the habit. It is not the actual occurrence of to-day which grieves and afflicts; but it is the imagination of what is likely to occur in some contingency of the future. "Take short views," says our adviser. Look at what you have already—this present day, this present hour. What is this but a paraphrase of our Lord's own direction—"Take no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Traveling on some of the railroads of the country—such, for example, as that which winds through the Alleghanies, or the Water-Gap of the Delaware—looking far in advance, it would seem that huge mountains were dropped directly upon your road, obstructing all progress, and bringing you to a pause. But when you advance to the spot, you find that there is a way along which the road may wind, narrow and circuitous, perhaps, but smooth, and safe, and level as elsewhere, working itself free from all impediments, and emerging at length again into the open and extended plain country. Just so is it in the journey of life. We anticipate formidable obstructions, and imagine that an end has come to all farther advances, by the towering mountains which stretch away across the distant horizon. Shorter views would make us content with the road which is ready for this day's journey; and past experience should satisfy us that there are no hills so high, no valleys so precipitous, no passes so rugged, but that a road runs through them all, when the time has actually arrived for the march. Every man gets through the world without coming to a halt.

! Another thing conducive to cheerfulness is the regu-

lation of desire within proper and natural limits. Another thing for which Sidney Smith deserves admiration was, amid all his honorable aspirations, the absence of mean jealousies. He had a brother who was titled and wealthy, but toward him was nothing exacting or envious. He occupied his own sphere, and was very brave and contented in managing his own affairs, and the very cattle in his inclosures had occasion to be thankful for his kindness. The conditions of contentment are put at a very low figure in the Scriptures—"having food and raiment." It is the intrusion of envy and jealousy which destroys cheerfulness; and if I were to string together a few brief hints as to the manner in which this bright virtue may be cultivated, they would be in this wise: As every man has a will of his own, you must expect every day that your own will be crossed; and when this is done, you must bear it as meekly as when you cross the will of another. Expect not too much of others, and then they will be more tolerant of you. Esteem others more highly than yourself, and watch for the opportunities in which you can say a kind word and confer a small pleasure. Be studious to see what is good and hopeful to be applauded in another, rather than what is evil to be reproved, and amid all the trivial annoyances of life, measure those substantial blessings which come to you every hour from the open hand of Christ; and if the practice of these rules does not cure a clouded brow and an irritable manner, then it is because you need, and most probably will have, some other medicine besides that of a merry heart.

Last of all, chief of all, if you would be cheerful in such a world as this, you must exercise a constant trust

in an all-wise Providence. When, in the earlier part of this discourse, I referred to the necessity of cheerful sentiments in regard to our national affairs, even when they were most alarming, do not suppose that I intended anything like that reckless confidence which is born of pride and inflated by egotism, which is at once our national characteristic and peril. We mean the recognition of that Divine Supremacy which directs the revolutions of time and events with a wisdom and love and power superior to our own, and an obedient deference to His will. If we will consider it honestly, we shall be convinced of the fact, that the occasions for individual and national gratitude which are owing to our own power and achievement are very few, while those are boundless which spring from Him who watches alike the fall of a sparrow and the rise of empires. Never was there a better compend of wisdom, for individuals and nations, than that expressed in these few words of inspiration, "Be careful for nothing" (the word denotes an uneasy, uncheerful apprehension), "but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." It has been very profanely said by some, in their perverse way, that, as things are among us, we have small occasion for thanksgiving. Such men ought to pass their lives in Mexico or Algiers. Nothing to be thankful for! If all the people of these States would, for the whole day, in their homes and in their houses of worship, employ themselves in recounting the mercies of God by which we are distinguished, what beneficent effects would flow from the

gratitude such an occupation would inspire. Direful evils there may be—national sins may provoke Divine displeasure—perils may environ us—but, notwithstanding all, how much for which we ought to be thankful! “The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad.” Let us come with our homage and gratitude, and sing praises to Him. In the worst times let this be our joyous confidence—“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” If there is one peril more than another which threatens our prosperity, I will venture to give it a name—that indifference to our mercies which might provoke God to withdraw them and give them to another people. May God incline us more and more to that unambitious, unselfish, contented, cheerful, thankful temper, which is at once a medicine and a feast, an ornament and protection.

Bear with me in one word of another sort, which, unsaid, might leave some heart in the revulsion of disappointment. This morning I received a note from a friend, informing me of the death of his child. It was on the morning of a Thanksgiving Day that I was myself once bereaved of a child. Not a few have come up to this place to-day in a strange loneliness. But there is nothing incongruous in what we have said to their condition. Mirth might be to them the occasion of affliction and pain, by the intrusion of contrary qualities. But as to cheerfulness, what heart knows so

much of it as that which has been mellowed by affliction? Not he who has been elated by long-continued prosperity knows the secret of true serenity, but meek-eyed sorrow speaks with a low and gentle voice of the goodness of God; and the best incentives to gratitude are those which memory brings up from the shadows of the past. If your young child does not occupy a seat at your table to-day; if you can not put your hand on its fair head with a blessing, thank God for its better home—its better shelter—and the warm and better love you bear it, now that the heavens have received it. May the God of all grace and consolation cause us all to abound in hope, even unto the end.

If there are fears and clouds, there is also a bow. Be still, be cheerful, be thankful. Let this day, sacred to religious gratitude, to contentment, to charity, aid us all in preparation for eternal songs and festivities in the Kingdom of God.